

Recent Progress of the Socialist and Labor Movements in the United States



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RECENT PROGRESS OF THE SOCIALIST AND LABOR MOVEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

The United States are steadily approaching the climax of capitalistic development—the trustification of industries. And this process is measured not by generations but by years. Within the six years following the United States Census of 1900, the capitalist production has probably made greater progress, absolutely and relatively, than within the ten-year period intervening between that year and the preceding census year.

From 1900 to 1905 the capital invested in large manufacture increased from about \$9,000,000,000 to \$12,700,000,000 in round figures, while the number of big manufacturing establishments remained practically stationary. The value of the annual product of the establishments comprised within that class rose within the same period from \$11,500,000,000 to almost \$15,000,000,000, and the number of wage workers employed by them from 4,715,000 to 5,470,000.

The Census of Manufactures, published last year by the Department of Commerce and Labor, reveals the astounding fact that, in 1904, 11.2% of the manufacturing establishments controlled 81.5% of all capital invested in manufacture in the United States, and supplied 79.3% of all products. Thirty-eight per cent. of the total values were produced by about 1900 establishments—less than one per cent. of the whole.

The development of the railroad industry easily kept pace with that of manufacturing, and both were overshadowed by the activity and speculation in the world of finance. The last few years, more than ever, witnessed the growth of colossal fortunes and the formation of stupendous business combines.

The march of capitalist progress degenerated into a mad,

frenzied race for wealth in which thousands participated while the millions were trampled under foot.

Capitalism became rampant and reckless, and the inherent viciousness of the system became more apparent and manifest every year.

The political and business quarrels of the contending princes of finance occasionally assumed such dimensions that they were bound to reach the public at large, and the captains of industry, conscious of their boundless power, occasionally grew reckless and cast caution to the winds.

EXPOSURE OF CORRUPTION.

In the summer of 1904, Thomas Lawson, a Boston financier who had fallen out with the powerful group of American money kings identified with the Standard Oil Company, commenced the publication of a series of graphic accounts of the methods of that combine, and the country stood aghast before the web of perfidy, baseness and corruption that characterize the dealings of our eminent citizens with each other and with the public.

This revelation of the mechanism of high finance was supplemented by the official investigation of the life insurance companies ordered by the legislature of New York State in 1905.

The business of life insurance is very extended in the United States. Hundreds of million dollars are invested in it by persons of all classes of society, and these vast sums frequently constitute the sole provision for the widows and orphans of the numerous policy holders. The legislative investigation revealed the most unscrupulous abuse of this "sacred" trust. The "high minded" financiers and prominent citizens, who, as a rule, managed the funds as trustees, did not scruple to dissipate them in extravagant salaries and fees to themselves, to manipulate them in their own shady financial transactions, and to draw on them freely for the support of the dominant political party and even for the purpose of wholesale bribery of State legislatures.

The echo of the scandals in the financial world had barely died out when the young socialist, Upton Sinclair, threw a bomb into the camp of industrial capitalism by the publication of his now famous novel, "The Jungle." The novel, containing a very realistic description of the revolting condi-

tions in our principal stock yards, created such a profound impression on the public mind that the president of the republic found himself impelled to make it the subject of an official investigation. The latter fully confirmed the charges of the novelist, and led to certain remedial legislation in the United States Congress.

At the same time and through various causes the bottomless corruption of the government of several of our largest cities was brought to light. New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee and St. Louis were at one time or another shown to be in the clutches of rapacious political rings, whose unscrupulous trading in city franchises, property and offices threw a glaring light on the political methods and morals of our country. In short, the beauties and blessings of concentrated capitalism became painfully apparent to the large mass of the population.

RADICAL LITERATURE.

The general popular discontent with existing conditions grew more wide-spread and deep-seated than ever, and found expression in all organs of our public life, and more particularly in our literature and politics.

If the literature of a country reflects the mental attitude of its people, then indeed the Americans must be said to have manifested of late a very decided revolt against existing political and economic abuses and a decided leaning towards radicalism. The criticism of existing institutions and the discussion of proposed social remedies have been the keynote of our national press and literature within the last few years.

In the domain of fiction, the radical novel, and even more so the socialist novel, have taken the first rank in order of importance and popularity. Not only are Jack London and Upton Sinclair, socialists and members of the Socialist Party, the most widely read novelists, but it has almost become impossible for any new novel to attract large attention and popular favor unless it deals with a social or socialistic motif. And generally Socialism has come to be the most frequent and vital topic of discussion in our books, magazines and newspapers.

While but a few years ago we found it impossible to

make the American press take notice of our movement, we have reached a point to-day where our most respectable publishing houses print out and out socialistic works, our magazines are replete with socialistic and semi-socialistic articles, and our daily papers devote columns upon columns to comments on the socialist movement and philosophy.

Another evidence of this spirit of the times is the "Literature of Exposure" which in recent years has enlisted under its banner the most gifted of our younger journalists and writers. This modern school of American literature has done much to uncover the rottenness and corruption of many of our political and industrial institutions, and has gained an extension and influence paralleled only by the old Russian literature of exposure which accompanied the movement for the emancipation of the serfs.

And finally mention must be made of the pseudo socialistic daily press which is trading upon the popular feeling of discontent and building up enormous circulations by feigning an ultra radical attitude on all questions agitating the public mind. The father of this modern brand of journalism is Mr. William Randolph Hearst, who has established a chain of newspapers of that type in the principal cities of the United States with a combined circulation estimated at two million copies per day.

REFORM POLITICS.

If the general discontent and "social unrest" were the keynote of our recent literature, they were in an even greater degree the guiding star in our recent politics. Probably in no country of the world are the political parties so devoid of definite party principles and so alert to the changing spirit of the times as in the United States. Within the last two years our dominant political parties actually vied with each other in radicalism. The Republican Party, now in power, has through its aggressive president inaugurated a systematic warfare against the "abuses of trusts and monopolies;" Congress has passed certain legislation for a stricter government supervision in the manufacture of food products, for the regulation of railroad rates, and restriction of child labor, while the United States Courts are exhibiting unwonted zeal in the enforcement of the anti-trust laws and the punishment of

capitalistic offenders. The Democratic Party, on the other hand, has taken occasion in numerous local and state platforms to denounce the villainous trusts and monopolies even more vehemently, and to demand the municipal and state ownership and operation of certain industries.

At the same time, and as part of the same process, new reform parties and movements have sprung up in various parts of the country.

The American Federation of Labor, the largest body of organized American workingmen, for the first time in its existence of a quarter of a century, violated its vow of political neutrality, when it interfered in the congressional elections of 1906.

In separate parts of the country, notably in the State of California, the local trade unions organized themselves into independent political parties under the name of Union Labor Party. In the City of San Francisco, the Western metropolis of America, that party succeeded twice in carrying the municipal elections.

But of far greater dimensions than these parties of labor were the numerous middle class reform movements of the most recent period of American politics.

The year 1905 was a banner year for those movements: it witnesses the election of Judge Edward F. Dunne as mayor of Chicago on a platform declaring for the municipal ownership of street railways and other municipal monopolies; the election into the gubernatorial chair of Missouri of Joseph W. Folk, who had made for himself a record in the prosecution of the criminal city official and political bosses of St. Louis; the election as governor of Wisconsin and subsequently as United States senator of Robert M. LaFollette, a noted radical and reformer in politics, and finally the signal feat of William R. Hearst in the City of New York.

THE HEARST MOVEMENT.

Mr. Hearst, who up to that time had played a somewhat inconspicuous part in Democratic politics, had through his papers raised the issue of municipal ownership in the New York City elections of 1905, and when the dominant political parties refused to endorse that issue,

he renounced his former political affiliations, and inaugurated a movement of his own. The organization in which the movement crystallized was the Municipal Ownership League, and its candidate for the mayoralty of New York was Mr. Hearst himself.

The organization was formed in the haste of the electoral campaign, and never had much more than a nominal existence; it stood for municipal ownership, and a string of other rather confused demands of a radical sound, but, above all, it represented the spirit of revolt against existing conditions. The movement was at first not taken seriously by the old-time politicians of New York, but as the election approached, it gathered unexpected strength and extension. On the day of election the official count gave Mr. Hearst 222,929 votes as against 228,397 counted for his successful opponent on the Democratic ticket, George B. McClellan. Mr. Hearst and his followers have ever since claimed with a great deal of apparent justification that he had been counted out, and the contest for the mayoralty of New York is still pending before the courts.

Encouraged by this rather unexpected success at the polls the Hearst forces entered in the state elections of 1906 on a larger scale. In the State of New York Mr. Hearst reorganized his party under the name of "Independence League" and accepted its nomination for governor of the state, on a somewhat indefinite, though on the whole radical, platform. He also received the endorsement of the Democratic Party on a quite definite and decidedly reactionary platform, and polled 691,105 votes as against 749,002 votes cast for his successful Republican opponent. His running mates on the fusion state ticket were elected to office. The Hearst movement also played an important part in the election in Massachusetts where its candidate, Mr. Moran, received 192,295 votes out of a total of little more than 400,000, and in California, where the Hearst candidate for governor, Mr. Langdon, polled 45,008 votes out of a total of about 300,000.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY.

The immediate effect of these radical developments in the economic, literary and political life of our country, upon the organized socialist movement was, as could have

been expected, not very favorable. The powerful reform movements holding out to the impatient masses the phantom hope of instantaneous relief, distracted their attention from the more radical but slower remedies offered by the Socialist Party, and while the socialist vote during the last few years on the whole shows a marked increase, it does not by any means keep pace with the growth of the socialist sentiment in the United States.

In the last campaign for the election of a president of the United States, the campaign of 1904, the political conditions were exceedingly favorable for socialism. The two great parties had both nominated "safe" and conservative candidates (the Republican president, Theodore Roosevelt and the Democratic Chief Judge of the New York Court of Appeals, Alton B. Parker), the old People's Party was discredited by its former alliance with the Democrats and disorganized and divided in its ranks. The Socialist Party, therefore, was the only representative of true radicalism in politics, and in a position to muster its full legitimate forces. The Socialist Party was thoroughly alive to its opportunities, and inaugurated a campaign which for its intensity, extension and effectiveness excelled all previous efforts of the socialist movement in this country. The vote polled for Eugene V. Debs, the presidential candidate of the party in that year, was 408,230, as against 229,762 votes in 1902, the previous highest record of the party. In the elections of 1906, however, the numerous reform parties and movements cut heavily into the Socialist Party vote, reducing it to 330,158 (based on the highest vote in every state). The Socialist Labor Party in the corresponding period polled 33,536 votes in 1904, and 24,880 in 1906.

The Socialist Party has no representatives in the United States Congress, but it has elected a number of its members to State and local offices in some parts of the country. In the State of Wisconsin the number of such Socialist Officials is no less than 126, among them one State Senator and five members of the Assembly. The town of Manitowoc has a socialist mayor, while in Milwaukee, the principal city of the State, the party has elected twelve members of the municipal council and has outstripped the Democratic Party in number of votes.

But, as already indicated, the progress of the socialist movement in the United States can by no means be measured by this fluctuating vote. The movement on the whole has made very large strides of late.

Towards the end of 1903 the Socialist Party consisted of about 1,200 organized local subdivisions, with a total number of about 20,000 enrolled and dues-paying members. At the close of 1906 the number of local organizations had risen to about 1,900, with a combined membership of not less than 35,000. The party has to-day regular state organizations in thirty-nine States of the Union, and scattered local organizations in other states and territories. And the Socialist Party does not comprise the entire organized socialist movement in the country. Its rival organization, known as the Socialist Labor Party, still claims a membership of several thousands, and besides both political parties of socialism there are hundreds of independent clubs and societies in different parts of the country organized for the sole purpose of socialist propaganda.

THE SOCIALIST PRESS.

Another indication of the progress of socialist sentiment in the United States is the growth of the socialist press.

In 1903 the Socialist Party was supported by about thirty publications in different languages. Within the last year the number of strictly socialist publications in the United States has increased to about fifty. Of these more than half are periodicals in the English language, three monthlies and the rest weeklies; twenty-three are printed in foreign languages as follows: Eight in German (of this number two are daily newspapers), four in Jewish (one monthly magazine, one weekly review and two daily papers), two in Finnish, and one each in the following languages: French, Italian, Bohemian, Polish, Hungarian, Lettish, Lithuanian, Slavonic and Swedish. It will thus be seen that the socialist propaganda has spread to all nationalities as well as to all sections of the country.

Since last fall the socialists of Chicago are publishing a daily newspaper in the English language, and the publi-

cation of similar papers is in active preparation in New York and California.

And the periodical publications are not the only medium of "the written propaganda" of socialism. Within the last few years an immense number of socialist books and pamphlets have been printed in the United States and sold or given away in large quantities. A number of these books and pamphlets have been brought out by large publishing houses as paying business propositions, but the bulk was produced by special socialist book publishers, notably Charles H. Kerr & Company of Chicago, and the "Appeal to Reason" of Girard, Kansas. Another and not less important species of socialist literature are the propaganda leaflets which the socialists print and distribute all over the country and all year round, especially, however, during political campaigns. These leaflets, treating the different aspects of the socialist movement and philosophy in a popular way, are mostly gotten up by the various state and local organizations of the Socialist Party, and we have no statistics as to their numbers. But we consider it a conservative estimate to say that within the last three years no less than 100,000,000 of such leaflets have been distributed in the different parts of the country.

CHARACTER OF THE MOVEMENT.

As in all other countries the socialist movement of the United States is primarily a working class movement. But it would be a mistake to assume that the active workers in the movement are confined entirely to the horny-handed sons of toil. In the United States, probably more than anywhere else, socialism is recruiting numerous adherents from the better situated classes of society. The Socialist Party counts among its membership a large number of professionals and business men and even men of considerable wealth and "social standing."

In the summer of 1905 Mrs. Carrie Rand, mother-in-law of the well known socialist writer and propagandist, George D. Herron, bequeathed the income of a fund of about \$200,000 for the establishment of an institution for the teaching of socialism and allied social sciences. The bequest resulted in the foundation of the Rand School of Social Science in the City of New York, in which a num-

ber of eager students are receiving systematic instruction from a teaching staff composed of several well known college professors and equally well known socialist writers and lecturers.

In the same year a number of college graduates and students organized an "Intercollegiate Socialist Society" for the purpose of encouraging and promoting the study of socialism in the circles of our college youth.

SOCIALIST PROSPECTS.

Thus the positive achievements of our socialist movement within the last three years are by no means unimportant. But the greater significance of that period lies not as much in its positive achievements as in the fact that it has created the material and prepared the ground for a larger and more commanding movement of socialism which is bound to spring up in the United States within a short time.

The deep feeling of discontent produced by the recent developments in our industrial and political life has taken a strong hold of large masses of the population. These masses will never again be reconciled to existing conditions and iniquities. They have discarded their old political faiths and cut loose from their old political affiliations; they are ready to join hands with the opponents of the existing regime. For some time to come they will probably yet form an easy prey for political quacks and adventurers of a radical or reform stripe. But these reform movements cannot hold them long. They have no clear program or philosophy, no definite social ideals, and no uniformity in action. They do not consistently represent the economic interests of the working class; they are bound in the long run to disappoint and disgust their followers and to collapse as the many sporadic reform parties before them have collapsed.

On the day of that collapse the socialist movement of America will reap a rich harvest, and that day is not far off.

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR.

The period of the last three years has been fully as eventful in the trade union movement as in the movement of socialism.

For the American Federation of Labor, it has been a period of prosperity and struggle. During the years 1904, 1905 and 1906, the Federation has issued over 1,000 new charters to different national, international and local unions. In the same period the dues-paying membership of all organizations affiliated with it rose from less than 1,500,000 to almost 2,000,000. In his report to the last annual convention of the Federation, held in November, 1906, President Samuel Gompers gives the following numbers of affiliated labor unions: National Unions, 119; State Federations, 36; Central Labor Bodies, 538; Local Trade and Federal Labor Unions, 759. The 119 National Unions consisted of no less than 27,500 local organizations.

The American Federation of Labor is by far the largest and strongest body of organized labor in the United States, but it does not comprise all of the trade unions in the country. It is estimated that 500,000 to 1,000,000 workmen are organized in smaller trade federations and in unaffiliated national and local unions, and these organizations likewise made substantial gains within the last few years.

THE "OPEN SHOP" MOVEMENT.

The rapid growth of the trade union movement could not fail to spread alarm in the ranks of the employing classes, and to give rise to concerted efforts to check the progress of organized labor. The most noteworthy movement in that direction is the so-called "open shop" agitation. The movement received special inspiration through an order of the President of the United States directing that the government printing office be run as an "open shop," i. e., that no discrimination be made in favor of union printers as against non-union printers. This was a blow aimed at the most vital principle of the trade union movement, the endeavor to bring all workingmen of the

organized trades under the jurisdiction of their respective organizations. The capitalists of the country eagerly took up the shibboleth and inaugurated a movement for the destruction of the trade unions in the name of the "open shop." The most important organ of the movement is the Citizens' Industrial Association, which was founded in Chicago in October, 1903. The organization adopted a declaration of principles in which it voices its opposition to "joint agreements, government arbitration in labor disputes, and to all plans for the settlement of labor strife which eliminate the right of every man to work where, when and for what he pleases, and the right of an employer to hire whom he pleases and for what he pleases."

In November, 1904, the organization held a national convention in the City of New York, which is said to have been attended by 400 delegates representing all parts of the country. In the following year Mr. Edward H. Davis, the secretary of the association, claimed for it a membership of "several hundred thousands of the manufacturers and business men of the United States." This statement is probably exaggerated, but the Citizens' Industrial Association and the various Manufacturers' Associations allied with it, certainly evidenced sufficient strength to organize numerous lockouts and to cause many strikes in their efforts to weaken the labor organizations of their respective industries. No less than 1,200 business concerns are said to have been involved in such labor struggles in 1904 alone. But in every case they met with sturdy and determined resistance on the part of the organized workingmen, and the campaign has on the whole so far been a failure.

THE CIVIC FEDERATION.

Another and more subtle attempt on the part of the employing classes to render the labor movement harmless is to be found in the organization of the National Civic Federation. This organization devised by the cunning mind of the late Senator Hanna, consists of a curious mixture of millionaires, labor leaders and "prominent citizens." It has for its ostensible object "the voluntary conciliation between employers and employees as distinguished from arbitration," but in reality it serves to palliate the aggressive spirit of organized labor without of-

fering any concessions on the part of organized capital. Of a certain conference held by that body in the City of New York on May 7, 1904, it was said that it represented hundreds of millions of capital and more than 2,500,000 wage earners. The latter assertion refers no doubt to the presence of the president and some other officials of the American Federation of Labor, who unfortunately allowed themselves to be drawn into the movement, but the Civic Federation has at no time exerted any influence on the rank and file of the trade union movement.

THE FEDERATION IN POLITICS.

Another important event in the recent history of American trade unionism is the political campaign of the Federation of Labor in 1906. For a number of years the Federation had stood on the principle of abstinence from organized working class politics, and had followed the policy of seeking favors from the state Assemblies and United States Congress by "lobbying" methods.

The fruits of that activity were very meagre indeed. Several states passed laws limiting the hours of labor of women and children and those of men in particularly dangerous or unhealthful callings, others adopted laws fixing a minimum wage for certain workmen employed on state or municipal work, and the National House of Representatives adopted an eight-hour law for all employees of the Federal government. But these laws proved of little real benefit to the working class.

Under the peculiar power of our courts to change laws by "interpretation" or to nullify them entirely on the ground that they conflict with certain provisions of the constitution, one labor law after the other was eradicated from the statute books of the states. The years 1905 and 1906 marked a veritable epidemic in the slaughter of such laws.

At the same time the departments of the United States government showed great reluctance in enforcing the Eight-Hour Law, and the various legislative measures fathered by the American Federation of Labor—a more effective eight-hour law, laws against cheap prison labor, against interference of courts in labor disputes by summary "injunction" orders, and all similar proposed

labor measures were systematically ignored or voted down by Congress.

The executive officers of the Federation finally grew weary of the game, and after consultation with the presidents of 117 national unions, they formulated what has become known as the "Labor's Bill of Grievances," a document reciting the persistent attempts of the American Federation of Labor to secure fair legislation from Congress, and honest enforcements of existing labor laws from government, and its uniform failure to secure either. It wound up with a demand for the redress of these grievances.

The document which was presented to the president of the United States, the president pro tempore of the United States Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, concluded with this remarkable statement:

"We present these grievances to your attention because we have long, patiently, and in vain waited for redress. There is not any matter of which we have complained but for which we have in an honorable and lawful manner submitted remedies. The remedies for these grievances proposed by Labor are in line with fundamental law, and with the progress and development made necessary by changed industrial conditions.

"Labor brings these its grievances to your attention because you are the representatives responsible for legislation and for the failure of legislation. The toilers come to you as your fellow-citizens who, by reason of their position in life, have not only with all other citizens an equal interest in our country, but the further interest of being the burden-bearers, the wage-earners of America. As Labor's representatives we ask you to redress these grievances, for it is in your power so to do.

"Labor now appeals to you, and we trust that it may not be in vain. But if perchance you may not heed us, we shall appeal to the conscience and the support of our fellow-citizens."

The Bill of Grievances received but scant attention from the President or the presiding officers of the Senate and House, and in the following campaign, in the fall of 1906, for the election of a new House of Representatives, the American Federation of Labor, true to its warning, took an active part in the campaign. Unfortunately the campaign was conducted by the officers of the Federation on the lines of the short-sighted, half-hearted policy, which always characterized their political views and actions. They did not rise to the point of conscious working class politics, they did not nominate candidates of their own, nor did they support the candidates of the So-

cialist Party. In fact the distinction between the Socialist Party as a party of labor and the two old parties, as parties of the possessing and employing classes, never dawned on them. The Federation limited its political activities to combating some Republican or Democratic candidates and supporting others on the sole test of their supposed personal hostility or friendship for organized labor.

And the result was that the greatest American labor organization with its two million members and tremendous powers in the world of the workers, made a lamentably poor debut in politics. However, the mere entry of the Federation in politics was a fact full of significance.

DISSATISFACTION WITH THE FEDERATION.

The last three annual conventions of the American Federation of Labor were marked by two features in particular; the decline of discussions on independent political action by the delegates, and the growth of jurisdictional disputes between the affiliated unions.

In former years the socialist delegates to the annual conventions of the American Federation of Labor had bent all their energies on the persistent effort to induce the Federation as a body to enter the political field on a radical working class platform, and in some instances their efforts were not altogether unsuccessful.

As far back as 1886 a national convention of the American Federation of Labor adopted a resolution urging its members "to give cordial support to the independent political movements of the working class," and seven years later a similar convention of the Federation submitted to the local unions the question of the advisability of independent politics on a program which, among others, contained the demand for "the collective ownership by the people of all means of production and distribution."

These efforts on the part of the socialists were perfectly natural at a time when the political organization of socialism had not much more than a nominal existence in the United States, and practically the entire strength of organized labor was represented by the trade union movement. But when the Socialist Party had commenced to demonstrate its ability to organize the working class of

the country politically on the clear cut lines of international socialism, the wisdom of forcing the creation of a rival political party of labor, of a presumably less satisfactory character, began to be seriously questioned. The socialists in the American Federation of Labor have accordingly abandoned the efforts to "capture" the Federation bodily, and have transferred their energies to the task of educating the individual trade unionists, in local meetings and state and national conventions, in the proper understanding of the socialist philosophy.

In all discussions on socialism on the floor of the Federation conventions, Mr. Samuel Gompers and other officers and leaders of the organization, invariably took the somewhat antiquated position of "pure and simple" trade unionism and occasionally evinced a very decided hostility towards the socialist movement. This unprogressive stand of its leaders resulted in a sentiment of dissatisfaction with the Federation in certain circles of organized labor, and the sentiment spread to other circles on account of the frequent jurisdictional disputes between its different affiliated unions.

The American Federation of Labor is organized on the principle of strict trade autonomy, and each national union within the Federation has exclusive jurisdiction of its respective trade. Thus where workmen of several trades are employed by one concern or in one enterprise, they are often divided into a number of separate organizations, who may happen to follow different and conflicting policies in their relations with the common employer. In such cases it may frequently happen that when occasion arises for concerted action against the employer, as for instance in strikes, the workmen may fail for want of unanimity and mutual support. In some instances, notably in that of the building trades, the difficulty is met by the formation of joint local boards, who are entrusted with the direction of all action against the common employer, but in other cases as f. i., those of the railway and brewery workers, the conflicting and sometimes antagonistic attitude occasionally taken by the separate trades in common employment, has often led to internecine feuds and acrimonious debates in the conventions of the American Federation of Labor.

The opposition to this feature of the Federation and the conservative attitude of its leaders, finally resulted in the formation of a rival body of organized labor—the

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD.

The organization of the Industrial Workers of the World is one of the most interesting of recent experiments in the field of organized labor.

It had its inception in a secret conference held in the City of Chicago in the early part of January, 1905. The conference was attended by about twenty-five persons, most of them officials of trade unions not connected with the American Federation of Labor, and several prominent socialists without trade union affiliations.

The deliberations of the conferees resulted in the issuing of a Manifesto to the working class of America, which may be regarded as the declaration of principles of the new movement.

The trend of argument of the noteworthy document is best shown by the following excerpts from it:

"Social relations and groupings only reflect mechanical and industrial conditions. The *great facts* of present industry are the displacement of human skill by machines and the increase of capitalist power through concentration in the possession of the tools with which wealth is produced and distributed.

"Because of these facts trade divisions among laborers and competition among capitalists are alike disappearing. Class divisions grow ever more fixed and class antagonisms more sharp. Trade lines have been swallowed up in a common servitude of all workers to the machines which they tend. * * *

"The worker, wholly separated from the land and the tools, with his skill of craftsmanship rendered useless, is sunk in the uniform mass of wage slaves. He sees his power of resistance broken by craft divisions, perpetuated from outgrown industrial stages. * * *

"Laborers are no longer classified by differences in trade skill, but the employer assigns them according to the machines to which they are attached. These divisions far from representing difference in skill or interests among the laborers, are imposed by the employers that workers may be pitted against one another and spurred to greater exercise in the shop, and that all resistance to capitalist tyranny may be weakened by artificial distinctions.

"While encouraging these outgrown divisions among the workers the capitalists carefully adjust themselves to the new conditions. They wipe out all differences among themselves, and present a united front in their war upon labor. * * *

"The employers' line of battle and methods of warfare correspond to the solidarity of the mechanical and industrial concentration,

while laborers still form their fighting organizations on lines of long-gone trade divisions. * * *

"Craft divisions hinder the growth of class consciousness of the workers, foster the idea of harmony of interests between employing exploiter and employed slave. They permit the association of the misleaders of the workers with the capitalists in the Civic Federations, where plans are made for the perpetuation of capitalism, and the permanent enslavement of the workers through the wage system. * * *

"Universal economic evils afflicting the working class can be eradicated only by a universal working-class movement. Such a movement of the working class is impossible while separate craft and wage agreements are made favoring the employer against other crafts in the same industry, and while energies are wasted in fruitless jurisdiction struggles which serve only to further the personal aggrandizement of union officials.

"A movement to fulfill these conditions must consist of one great industrial union embracing all industries—providing for craft autonomy locally, industrial autonomy internationally, and working class unity generally.

"It must be founded on the class struggle, and its general administration must be conducted in harmony with the recognition of the irrepressible conflict between the capitalist class and the working class. * * *

"Local, national and general administration, including union labels, buttons, badges, transfer cards, initiation fees, and per capita tax should be uniform throughout. * * *

"Transfers of membership between unions, local, national or international, should be universal.

"Workingmen bringing union cards from industrial unions in foreign countries should be freely admitted into the organization. * * *

"A *central defense fund*, to which all members contribute equally, should be established and maintained."

The Manifesto concluded with a call for a convention for the purpose of forming a new organization based on these principles, and was signed by the members of the secret conference and several other persons well known in the radical labor movement of the country including the late presidential candidate of the Socialist Party, Eugene V. Debs.

The convention initiated by the manifesto assembled in Chicago on June 27, 1905, and was rather disappointing to the originators of the movement. The expected secession of a number of national trade unions from the conservative American Federation of Labor did not materialize. Of the 212 delegates who participated in the convention, 5 represented the Western Federation of Miners with

a membership of 27,000, 7 represented the American Labor Union, a federated body of trade unions confined almost entirely to the extreme West, with a total membership of 16,780, and 2 delegates represented the United Metal Workers International Union with 3,000 members. All these were organizations not affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. Most of the remaining delegates represented small local organizations, while about sixty represented no organizations at all.

But what the convention lacked in numbers and strength, it amply made up in enthusiasm. During the eleven days of its deliberations, the delegates submitted the methods of existing trade unions to a scathing criticism, ratified all points and planks of the Manifesto, created an organization under the grandiloquent name of "Industrial Workers of the World," elected officers and adopted a constitution.

The form of organization of the new body was devised in accordance with the views expressed in the manifesto. In the language of the initiators of the movement, the organization was to be "built as the structure of Socialist society, embracing within itself the working class in approximately the same groups and departments of industries that the workers would assume in the working class administration of the Co-operative Commonwealth."

The organization is divided into thirteen Industrial Departments, such as the departments of Mining, Transportation, Food Stuffs, etc., which together are supposed to cover the entire field of the modern industrial world. The departments are composed of separate unions of "closely kindred" industries. The affairs of each industrial department are administered by separate executive boards, subject, however, to the direction and control of a General Executive Board, which consists of one member from each of the thirteen departments. The executive head of the organization is the General President, who has general supervision of all its affairs. All members of the local unions pay a uniform per capita tax of 25 cents per month, of which two-thirds go to the respective departments, and one-third to the general organization. A specified portion of the dues received by the general organization is applied for the accumulation of a central defense fund.

During the first year of its existence the Industrial Workers of the World made slow but steady progress, and at its second annual convention held in September, 1906, General President Charles O. Sherman was able to report a not inconsiderable increase of membership. But the progress of the new movement was suddenly checked by internal strife.

Among the organizations that assisted at the birth of the Industrial Workers of the World were also the remnants of the "Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance," the miscreant child of the Socialist Labor Party, whose total membership had been reduced to 1,400 as claimed by its representatives, or to about 600 as asserted by its opponents. The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance has a record of having caused more disputes and schisms within the socialist labor movements in America in recent years than any other single factor, and its affiliation with the new movement was fateful for the latter. Months before the second convention, the Alliance under the direction of the shrewd leader of the Socialist Labor Party, Daniel De Leon, laid plans to capture the administration of the Industrial Workers of the World, and through skillful manipulation of delegates, it succeeded in obtaining control of the convention. The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance ruled the convention completely: it practically remodeled the constitution of the organization, abolished the office of General President, and chose a new Executive Board from among its supporters and adherents. But the triumph of the Alliance was not lasting. According to the provisions of the constitution of the Industrial Workers the acts of the convention are not final unless ratified by the general vote of the membership.

Based upon this provision, the adherents of the old regime claimed that the acts of the convention were not operative and that the newly elected officers could not assume the direction of the organization until such time as the membership of the Industrial Workers would ratify the proceedings of the convention. The leaders of the Alliance refused to adopt that construction of the constitution, and the old officers promptly declared all acts of the convention illegal and void. The split within the ranks of the Industrial Workers was now complete. The two

factions maintained rival sets of officers, and the dispute was taken into the courts, which decided in favor of the old administration. In the meanwhile, the Western Federation of Miners, the strongest body of workingmen affiliated with the Industrial Workers, severed its affiliation with the organization.

The fate of the Industrial Workers of the World has thus, on the whole, not justified the sanguine expectations of its sponsors, at least not up to the date of this writing. Whether either of the two contending factions will make more satisfactory progress in the future, and whether "industrial unionism" is destined to play a serious part in the American Labor movement through the agency of the new organization or otherwise, the next few years will demonstrate.

The Socialist Party at its last convention held in 1904 refused to be drawn into the internal disputes of the trade unions, but expressed its solidarity with all bona fide economic organizations and struggles of labor, and the party as such has not deviated from that attitude upon the organization of the Industrial Workers of the World.

To sum up the situation in the political and economic struggles of American labor, we must say that it is in a state of general fermentation, on the eve of a great change. The powerful march of economic development is bound to shake up the working classes, to force them ahead to more harmonious action and to socialistic consciousness.

THE MOYER-HAYWOOD CASE.

By far the most significant and interesting episode in the recent history of organized labor and socialism in the United States is the dramatic labor struggle in Colorado, with its culminating point—the arrest and imprisonment of the leaders of the Western Federation of Miners—Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, on the charge of murder.

ORIGIN OF THE COLORADO TROUBLES.

The principal industry of Colorado is mining, and the greater part of the working population of the state consists of mine workers. These were a lot of sorely exploited, overworked, underpaid and abused men until the year 1893, when they and the mine workers of some neigh-

boring states banded themselves together into an organization under the name "Western Federation of Miners." The Federation grew rapidly, and in 1899 it had gained sufficient strength and influence in Colorado to induce the Legislature to pass an eight-hour law for all workers in the mines.

The law was, as usual, declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court on the first test, but nothing daunted, the laboring population of Colorado took up the fight anew, and in 1902, they succeeded in passing a constitutional amendment which made it mandatory on the incoming Legislature to enact an eight-hour law for the miners.

But the Legislature, bribed or cowed by the mine owners, ignored the constitutional command, and adjourned without passing such law.

The organized workingmen of Colorado thus twice betrayed by the political representatives of their employers, and persistently persecuted on account of their allegiance to their union, resolved to take the battle into their own hands; they struck for an eight-hour day for more humane treatment in the mines.

The strike was well organized and effective; the strikers were orderly and determined; they had the undivided sympathy of the population, and their victory seemed assured.

The mine owners of Colorado were now thoroughly alarmed. They decided to break the workingmen's strike and their organization by all means, fair or foul, and proceeded to the execution of their task with unscrupulous brutality. They evicted their employes from their homes and, where possible, cut off their food supply; they hired thugs to assault the strikers, and harassed, maltreated and persecuted their defenseless wives and innocent children. But the strikers showed no signs of surrender. They camped out on the public highways, faced exposure, sickness and starvation, and still their ranks did not weaken; they remained grimly determined to fight out the battle forced on them by their employers.

It was then that the ruling classes of Colorado turned for aid to the Governor of the state, James A. Peabody. And the Governor promptly responded to their appeal. The peaceful mining districts were infested by a horde of

unprincipled troops led by brutal commanders. Martial law was declared in the strike districts, and all safeguards of law and the constitution were swept away. The State of Colorado was with one fell blow reduced to the political level of Russia, with Governor Peabody and Lieutenant-General Sherman Bell as the undisputed autocrats.

The workingmen affiliated with the Western Federation of Miners, and the citizens suspected of sympathy with them, were dealt with as outlaws; they were arrested by the hundreds without warrant, crowded into monstrous "bull-pens," and without trial and conviction deported from the state. The reign of terror inaugurated by the Colorado mine owners stopped at nothing; public officials regularly elected by the people were forcibly ousted from office if found unwilling to join in the carousal of lawlessness; mines were forcibly closed if their owners permitted union men to work in them; the courts, the churches and the press were bribed or cowed to support this reign of infamy; the writ of habeas corpus was suspended; the civil powers of the state were ignored, and theft, arson, assault and murder were freely committed by the "better classes."

The strike was not broken, it was literally physically crushed. And when the devastation of the mining districts in Colorado was complete, the militia withdrew with military honors.

But the ruling classes of Colorado were not satisfied. Their triumph was not yet complete. For while the strike was crushed, the greater evil, the organization of the workingmen, the "lawless, criminal" Western Federation of Miners, was still alive. The experience of the Colorado laborers during the reign of the law and order vandals had only served to strengthen the tie that bound them together, the tie of common sufferings and common struggles. Their organization rapidly recovered from the severe blow, and was again thriving under the leadership of its efficient and fearless officials, Chas. H. Moyer, William D. Haywood and others. These leaders could not be bribed or bought, hence they must be removed in some other way, in some way which would bring them and their following in lasting disgrace and would stamp out organized labor for many years to come.

This was the persistent aim of the western mine owners, and to this end they employed a large force of private detectives. They had the machinery of the government at their command; they had the wheels of justice greased, they only waited for the pretext.

And the pretext came. On December 30th, 1905, Frank Steunenberg, former Governor of Idaho, was killed by means of an infernal machine at the gate of his house. Steunenberg, during his administration, had been to Idaho what Peabody was to Colorado, and the inference naturally rose that his assassination was a deed of vengeance. But who committed the ruthless deed? For weeks this was a matter of speculation. Suddenly the world of organized labor was startled by the news that Moyer, Haywood, Pettibone and St. John, all leaders of the Western Federation of Miners, had been arrested, charged with complicity in the heinous crime.

The charge bore the mark of clumsy fabrication on its face. Moyer and the other prisoners are workmen of the most advanced and enlightened type and members of the Socialist Party. They were well known in the labor world as foes of all acts of violence; during the bitterest persecutions in Colorado they had persistently counseled order in the ranks of the strikers and cautioned their followers not to allow themselves to be provoked by the lawless acts of the militia.

On the other hand, the mine owners had in their former struggles with the mine workers repeatedly attempted to fasten various heinous crimes on the strike leaders, even going to the extent of organizing outrages such as derailing trains and blowing up railway stations, for the purpose of creating public sentiment against the strikers and removing influential strike leaders.

Furthermore, Steunenberg had for many years before his death retired from public life and ceased to be a factor in politics. There was, therefore, no motive for the Western Federation of Miners to commit the crime even if it possessed the requisite moral depravity. And finally the entire charge rested practically on the alleged confession of one Harry Orchard, a criminal and degenerate of the lowest type, a confession procured by a private detective in the pay of the mine owners.

But what made the case still more significant was the manner of arrest of the accused. The prisoners were residents and citizens of the State of Colorado, the crime was committed in the State of Idaho. Under the provisions of our constitution each state has exclusive jurisdiction of crimes committed within its boundaries, but where a person charged with the commission of a crime "flees from justice and is found in another state," the Governor of such state may upon demand in proper form surrender the fugitive to the Governor of the state in which the crime was committed.

Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone had not been in Idaho at the time of the killing of Steunenberg, nor for a number of years before, and the Governor of Colorado was, therefore, without power to arrest the accused or to surrender them to the Idaho authorities. To overcome this difficulty, the Governors of Idaho and Colorado virtually entered in a conspiracy to kidnap the officers of the Miners' Federation and to hurry them over the state border without giving them a chance to appeal to the courts of their state or to assert their constitutional rights. And the conspiracy was carried out in all details. On Thursday, February 15, 1906, an agent of the State of Idaho arrived at Denver with a requisition for the arrest of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, but by agreement with the Colorado State authorities the arrest was deferred. On the following Saturday evening when the courts and law offices were closed, the accused were suddenly arrested and thrown into the county jail. They were not allowed to communicate with their friends or lawyers, and early on the following morning they were surrounded by a heavy armed guard and forcibly and hastily removed to Idaho on a special train.

The imprisoned union officials subsequently appealed to the United States Courts for release from their illegal imprisonment, but the courts refused to interfere in the case. In rendering its final decision on the case, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down a most remarkable opinion in which it held in effect that while the arrest of the prisoners was illegal and might have been brought about by fraud and by conspiracy between the Governors of the two states, the State of Idaho had pos-

session of the accused, and that the latter were without remedy in law or under the Constitution of the United States. Justice McKenna, who dissented from the prevailing opinion of his colleagues on the Supreme Court Bench, denounced the action of the two Governors as a criminal conspiracy, and the arrest of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone in the manner described as an act of kidnapping and a flagrant violation of the constitutional rights of the defendants.

The accused officials of the Miners' Union remained confined in prison without bail for about a year and a half awaiting trial. And in the meanwhile the powers of capital were busy preparing the way for their conviction. The Governor of the State of Idaho loudly proclaimed his conviction in the guilt of the accused, and made no secret of his desire to see them hanged. The Legislature of the State voted special appropriations and retained prominent counsel for the prosecution of the miners; the reactionary press throughout the country periodically treated its readers to gruesome accounts of the alleged criminal career of the Western Federation of Miners, and assiduously poisoned the public mind against the prisoners, and finally the President of the United States capped the climax of incitement against the accused miners by publicly branding them as "undesirable citizens" in advance of their trial.

The trial finally began on the 9th day of May, 1907, and lasted with very few and brief interruptions for 84 days. In many respects the trial is without a parallel in the annals of criminal jurisprudence in the United States. By agreement of counsel the defendants were to be tried separately, and as the prosecution believed to have the strongest case against William D. Haywood, the secretary-treasurer of the Western Federation of Miners, it was the indictment against him that was taken up first. Formally the defendant Haywood was charged with the killing of the former Governor Steunenberg, but in point of fact the trial resolved itself into an inquiry into all incidents of the embittered war which had been waged for years between the mine owners of the West and their workingmen. Upon the theory that the assassination of Steunenberg was but one of the results of a general conspiracy on the part of the leaders of the miners' organization to remove

and destroy their enemies, the prosecution was permitted to go into all crimes which had accompanied the long series of miner strikes in Idaho and Colorado. Every assault, murder, outrage and act of violence which had occurred in the troubled district during the past ten years, was sought to be laid at the door of the Western Federation of Miners, and the leaders of the organization were represented as fiends professionally and systematically engaged in the business of assassination as part of the routine of their activity. The foundation for all the gruesome charges against the accused labor leaders was laid by Harry Orchard, and the testimony of this principal witness for the prosecution was as extraordinary as was the entire trial. On the witness stand he calmly confessed to about twenty different murders committed by him at various times in his career besides every other species of crime enumerated in the penal code, from theft and gambling to bigamy and arson. Orchard proved himself to be a most abnormal and hideous criminal monster with a strong suspicion of insanity. But for the time being he could be used against the dangerous socialists and labor leaders of Colorado, and incredible as it may sound, the loathsome creature was made the pet of the capitalist moralists. In prison he was surrounded with all imaginable comforts, and the Governor of the State and other high officials fraternized with him. It was announced that he had become religious and repentant, prominent clergymen gave him a testimonial of character, a reputed Harvard professor proclaimed that he had ascertained his truthfulness and good faith by unerring scientific methods, the press throughout the breadth and width of the country sang his praise, a "reputable" magazine published his autobiography—in a word Orchard was the hero, almost the saint of our respectable classes.

As against this polluted testimony, almost entirely uncorroborated, the defense produced no less than eighty-seven witnesses, including Charles H. Moyer, the president of the Federation, and Haywood himself, who disproved the charges of the prosecution. The testimony of the witnesses, men and women of all classes and callings, rapidly unfolded the true facts of this most remarkable case, and although the most influential part of the daily

press was careful to suppress or mutilate these damaging facts, enough leaked out to show that the true conspiracy in the case was not one of the miners' union against the mine owners, but vice versa: that the mine owners had for years maintained in the unions of the workingmen their hired spies charged with the mission of disrupting the organization and inciting its members to riots, and the indications were very strong that Orchard was just one of those hired spies. Many of the crimes charged up to the Federation were traced to such spies or to the mine owners direct, and the brutal and lawless dealings of the latter with their striking employes were fully and glaringly brought to light. The presiding judge subsequently struck from the records all testimony of the counter conspiracy against the mineworkers, but he could not efface its effects on the minds of the jury. The twelve jurors who tried the case were, with one exception, farmers who had no understanding for or sympathy with the struggles of labor. They had all, and some of them intimately, known the assassinated former Governor of their state; they had all read the hostile newspaper accounts of the case, and they frankly stated that they entered the jury box with a prejudice against the accused. But the case of the prosecution was so weak, and the testimony for the defense so compelling, they they took but a very short time for their deliberations and decision.

The case was submitted to them by noon on the 27th day of July, and on the 28th in the morning they announced their verdict—"Not Guilty."

This triumphant acquittal of Haywood is bound to terminate the prosecution against his associates, Moyer and Pettibone, since all three cases are based on the same charge and depend on the same evidence.

Thus ended one of the boldest and most determined attacks of capital on organized labor in the United States within recent years.

The attempt to crush a growing labor movement by means of judicial murder is not without a parallel in the history of this country.

The strong eight-hour agitation of 1886 resulted in the famous or rather infamous arrest and trial of the intellectual leaders of that movement in Chicago, the group

of men known as the Chicago Anarchists. The trial was conducted in utter disregard of established laws and methods of procedure and will forever remain a horrible example of brutal class justice. The defendants were found guilty without evidence, several of them were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, while four, Spies, Parsons, Fischer and Engel were hanged on the 11th day of November, 1887. Six years later the brave Governor of Illinois, John P. Altgeld, in pardoning the surviving victims, publicly branded the trial as a gross perversion of justice.

To those who are familiar with the details of the Chicago drama, its inception, development and methods employed, the events in Colorado and Idaho looked like a suspiciously close imitation, and involuntarily we exclaim with the great German poet:

"Ich kenne die Weise, ich kenne das Lied, ich kenne die Herren Musikanten."

But between the execution of the Chicago anarchists and the trial of Haywood, just twenty years have elapsed, and conditions have greatly changed during that period. Within those twenty years the labor movement has become a social factor of prime importance in the United States, and the socialist movement has become strong and alert to all dangers threatening the working class. An act of cold blooded judicial class murder can no more occur as readily to-day as it did in 1887.

Immediately upon the arrest of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, a powerful wave of protest and indignation against the attempted social crime swept the laboring population of the country from one end to the other. The annual convention of the American Federation of Labor held in Minneapolis in November, 1906, publicly branded the proceedings in the case as an outrage and travesty upon justice. Numerous national and local organizations contributed large sums of money for the defense of the accused mine workers, and passed resolutions in condemnation of the lawless conduct of the executives of Idaho and Colorado; the labor press devoted much space to the discussion of the case; millions of leaflets were distributed and thousands of public meetings were held before the trial in all parts of the country in order to arouse the people to a consciousness of the full enormity of the contem-

plated crime against organized labor, and an agitation was unfolded which eventually forced some influential daily papers to depart from the general policy of the press, and to join their voice to that of organized labor in criticism of the unlawful methods employed in the arrest and trial of the Colorado miners.

And finally when President Roosevelt in an unguarded moment so frankly aligned himself against the accused miners, the indignation of the organized workers of the United States was roused to the highest pitch; resolutions of protest were adopted and published by hundreds of labor unions, and labor delegations were sent to Washington to remonstrate with the chief executive of the nation for his unjustifiable and tactless utterance.

In all phases of the agitation in behalf of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, the socialists assumed the initiative and intellectual leadership. In every state and city they were the most tireless and influential workers in the movement, which has largely served to knit more closely the bonds of solidarity between them and the trade unions.

And if the workingmen of the United States have succeeded in averting the great blow aimed at their organizations and leaders, the socialists of this country have had a large share in that success.